

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, May 24, 2006, 12:00 p.m., Rm. 113,
First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street,
Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Gene Carroll, Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Gerry Krieser, Mary Strand, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor; Roger Larson absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mike Piernicky of Olsson Associates; Roger Figard, Randy Hoskins, Mike Brienzo, Roger Ohlrich, and Virendra Singh of Public Works and Utilities; Marvin Krout, Kent Morgan, David Cary, and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department; Patte Newman of the City Council.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Long Range Transportation Plan

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

Hoskins began by providing a brief review of the process to date. He stated that the purpose of today's meeting is to provide the Commissioners with information to begin the process of narrowing the network alternatives to one.

He distributed a summary of the alternative networks. The Commissioners recommended ten alternatives. An eleventh alternative was added by the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) Technical Committee, which was the widening of O Street to six lanes.

Piernicky stated that they have provided an analysis on each of the networks. They found out there were not many differences among the networks in terms of trip time. It is important to note that currently we have an 8 minute trip time, and the model is projecting an average trip time of approximately 13.5-14 minutes.

Next, they calculated a benefit/cost ratio for each of the networks. He noted that the cost of the roadways is not inflated for future values, but they did not inflate the incomes either. The reason for this is because they do not know when the roadways are going to be built. They looked at the 2030 land use on the existing no-build network. The benefits for the year 2030 ranged from \$930 million to a little over \$1 billion. The roadway improvement costs ranged from \$1.3 billion to \$1.6 billion. The benefit/cost ratios ranged from 0.62 to 0.72. He noted that these numbers are just for one year of 2030. Piernicky explained that in the final year of the plan, the benefits to the users in that one year will be approaching three-quarters of the total cost of all the improvements.

Esseks asked what the continuing growth base network (CGBN) includes. Hoskins stated that many of the 4+1 roadways on the perimeter which were identified in the 2025 plan were made 2+1 roads.

Esseks asked if they discounted the future benefits and costs to present value. Hoskins stated that all calculations were made using the present value. All of the costs and expected revenues are in 2006 dollars.

Carlson commented that we need to be careful when looking at the benefit/cost ratio. Even though the CGBN has a high ratio, some of that is because we are stripping off the edge improvements that we won't need for several years.

Esseks asked why they did not discount to present value. He has a concern that the numbers are misleading because they have not taken into consideration the timing of the improvements. Piernicky stated that there is not an implementation plan for all the projects, so they did all the analyses in 2006 dollars. Hoskins stated that they are trying to provide relative numbers. He would assume that the highest priority needs are going to be built in roughly the same order, which would lessen that concern.

Strand also noted that it needs to be emphasized publicly that road improvements provide many additional benefits such as new subdivisions, new businesses and new tax dollars.

Hoskins also noted that they removed all of the one-way networks.

Piernicky began a PowerPoint presentation by showing the matrix of the twelve networks with each of the improvements identified. Because of the one-way pair options, they moved ahead with alternatives 8 through twelve. He also presented a map of the proposed additions to each of the networks.

They also did travel time comparisons. They ran the model on 8 hypothetical case trips around town on Alternatives 8 through twelve. Maps of these case trips were also distributed. They found that virtually there is almost no difference among the case studies. That is largely due to the fact that a large number of the trips are in the core of the City. They are going to do more detailed analysis.

Esseks stated that widening O Street will be costly in terms of businesses disrupted and the expense. It would be similar with Cornhusker and Highway 2. He asked if there will be any significant improvements over not doing anything. Piernicky stated that if we add capacity to these streets, we will pull traffic from adjacent parallel roadway networks. Krout asked if the travel times can be identified on the parallel roads. Piernicky cautioned that we would be starting to get into sub-area analysis, but with significant additional work, the information could be gathered. Krout stated that he believes it is important to look at it further to be able to justify the expenditure for the benefit.

Strand asked for clarification on whether factors such as widening are taken into consideration. Piernicky stated that generally they would not see a difference on a north-south route because Highway 2 is widened, for example. He added that the model does not take into account individual signalized intersections and the delay for peak hours. Hoskins stated that the model does not take into account intersection improvements.

Esseks asked what factors can be used in deciding on one network when the model does not provide enough differentiation. His fear is that the public will ask why not do the cheapest model if there is not much difference in the networks anyway.

Taylor asked if it would be more useful to look at peak travel times as opposed to less traveled times.

Hoskins stated that the model is set up for looking at the big picture. The model can provide that type of detailed sub-area analysis, but it is not in the scope of this project.

Piernicky reviewed the upcoming schedule. May 31 is the work session to finalize the alternative. June 7 is the long range transportation text workshop.

Cornelius stated that he believes some expert input may be valuable as well as an explanation of their evaluation on the model output.

Carlson asked how Alternative 12 came about. Hoskins stated that it was the result of last week's public input forum. One of the speakers, Ms. Jensen, suggested that there was a need to have an inner-loop.

Hoskins asked the Commissioners what additional information they would like. Strand stated that she would like a cost/benefit ratio from a common sense approach, as the information given is not providing clear guidance. Esseks agreed and reiterated that the financial analysis does not aid in decision-making as there is not much difference in the numbers.

The meeting concluded at 12:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth
Planning Department